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**Translating Gender in Thirteenth-Century French Cross-dressing
Narratives: La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine and Le Roman de
Silence**

Focusing on two thirteenth-century narratives about female cross-dressing, the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine and the Roman de Silence,¹ this article explores areas of productive dialogue between medieval literary studies and current perspectives on gender and translation. Translation studies have in recent times enabled a more expansive philosophical reflection on the intersections between language, ontology, and identity; here, I use a piece written by Judith Butler for an influential translation studies reference work as an illustration of such reflection. If, as Butler suggests in her article, translation is not just a matter of linguistic transfer between texts but is also connected to the processes of construing, comprehending, re-presenting, and transforming at work in lived existence, how might these different senses of translation be connected in medieval texts? How might such a reflection offer ways of linking textual modes of translation to translation's role in subject formation?

Cross-dressing in medieval narratives - a phenomenon that often accompanies a more expansive reflection on the nature of identity - offers a particularly illuminating vantage on such questions. As my readings of the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine and the Roman de Silence will demonstrate, gender emerges in these

texts through multiple, often intersecting, modes of translation which are bound up with and set into relief by the female protagonists' masculine gender presentation. These narratives explore the ways in which subjectivity can be made or remade through the translation of discursive conventions that encompass linguistic, social, and familial constructions of gender. In ways that extend Butler's thinking, they also point to ways of connecting gender and translation in more specifically medieval literary contexts. I argue that the depiction of gender in both of these works is part of a set of translation problems associated with what might be termed "genre trouble": moments where texts borrow from and critically engage with the discursive conventions of other vernacular literary genres. Within this setting, gender is translated not only by characters within the texts themselves, but also by narrators, readers, and listeners.

Gender and/as Translation: Language and Lived Experience

In her article on "Gender and gender trouble" commissioned for the English version of Barbara Cassin's Dictionary of Untranslatables, Judith Butler frames debates on gender within a set of translation problems.² Noting how the English term "gender" poses difficulties of translation when integrated into other linguistic and cultural contexts, she points out that gender assignment itself also works through a form of

translation that attempts to make sense of something that resists clear definition. If the term "gender" is difficult to translate on a linguistic level, this is because it designates an untranslatable that is not reducible even to the English term, an untranslatability that she suggests also extends to the lived experience of gender. Butler's article thus develops upon the way untranslatables are understood in the Dictionary more broadly: as phenomena that, rather than being beyond any linguistic or philosophical reach, are continually in the process of being translated precisely because they resist translation. Citing psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche's work, Butler suggests that to be called a gender is to be subject to a demand without fully knowing the terms of that demand. The infant, in being gendered, is thus placed in a situation where it must translate an enigmatic and overwhelming signifier at a point when it has little command of language. Gender consequently operates within generalized discursive conditions that are enigmatically and overwhelmingly imposed on the infant and integrated into every aspect of its embodied life. Butler accordingly frames the questions this raises for the subject in terms of the translation of an untranslatable demand: if gender emerges as an enigma for the child from the earliest stages of its existence,

[...] the question may well not be, "what gender am I?" but rather, "what does gender want of me?" or even, "whose

desire is being carried through the assignment of gender that I have received and how can I possibly respond? Quick - give me a way to translate!"³

Butler's example offers a means of using translation and philosophical untranslatability to pose the problem of sexual difference to ontology, or what it means "to be" in genre.⁴ Translation here is not just a matter of linguistic transposition but is also connected to the interpretation of codes and demands upon which one is enjoined to act and to integrate into lived existence.

Butler's previous work explores in more detail the place of psychoanalysis in identifying aspects of the subject that cannot be known or articulated, aspects that are consequently implicated in undoing our subjectivity in ways that expose us to others.⁵ Her article in the Dictionary suggestively connects this work to questions of translation and untranslatability in a broader sense. One aspect of this earlier thinking with a bearing on the questions of identity explored in medieval literature is the way it attends to narrative as well as language (and the gender norms associated with language). For instance, in Giving an Account of Oneself, Butler suggests that the bodily condition of one's narrative account of oneself is untranslatable. The fact of being "this" body resists any translation into narrative, even if it structures the account of myself I might give and exposes me to others:

I can never provide the account of myself that both certain forms of morality and some models of mental health require, namely, that the self deliver itself in coherent narrative form. The "I" is the moment of failure in every narrative effort to give an account of oneself. It remains the unaccounted for and, in that sense, constitutes the failure that the very project of self-narration requires. Every effort to give an account of oneself is bound to encounter this failure, and to founder upon it.⁶

Here, the attempt to translate the enigmatic demands of discourses that facilitate my narrative of myself, while forcing me to engage with norms I do not author (including gender norms), runs up against the untranslatable part of bodily experience that cannot be narrated. This implies that the untranslatability of gender as Butler describes it in the Dictionary is not, perhaps, to be thought of as a property of gender; rather, it is part of an attempt to translate or narrate the self in discursive terms, an attempt that founders upon a part of bodily experience that always refuses that translation.

The depiction of cross-dressed characters in medieval texts sometimes raises remarkably similar questions to those Butler poses, even if those questions are framed in specifically medieval ways. My argument focuses on two

thirteenth-century works featuring female cross-dressing, the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine and the Roman de Silence, which have, respectively, been associated on linguistic grounds with Western France and Northern France/Picardy.⁷ I concentrate my discussion on cross-dressed characters because of the way these figures act as focal points for exploring issues of gender identification in medieval texts.⁸ The intricate question of what gender “wants” in these narratives is presented as a problem of translation in more than one sense. That is, the gender trouble with which transvestism is associated not only raises the question of what language, nature, and society demand of the gendered individual, but also what different types of vernacular texts demand. Simon Gaunt has persuasively identified major genres of medieval French literature with distinctive articulations of gender.⁹ The two narratives I examine here make use of the intersections between gender and genre in subtle ways, drawing on conventional constructions of both masculinity and femininity in other types of medieval literature. Adapting Butler’s terms to medieval literary contexts, I argue that the depiction of gender in these texts connects gender trouble to “genre trouble”: moments where these works critically engage with the discursive conventions of other genres.

This kind of intertextual dialogue is a phenomenon that has traditionally been associated with courtly narratives in

French, but less comprehensively examined in vernacular hagiography. In cases where intertextual reference in hagiography has been considered, the phenomenon is frequently seen in terms of popularizing imitation or as a form of generic hybridity that brings incompatible ideologies into contact.¹⁰ One of the purposes of this article is therefore to consider the broader implications of such intergeneric dialogue in vernacular saints' lives for questions of gender and its representation. Conversely, when it comes to Silence, I suggest that readings of this romance, which has more usually been considered in the context of other romance texts, might be enriched by more extensive comparison with hagiography.

The Untranslatability of Gender in La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine

Hagiographic narratives featuring holy women who dressed and lived as men were popular throughout the Middle Ages, both in Latin and in the vernacular languages of medieval Europe.¹¹ An established view of how cross-dressing functions in such texts is articulated by Valerie Hotchkiss: "in almost every case recognition of holiness is earned primarily through the denial of womanhood. It is as if, to the authors of these lives, a woman's willingness to repress femininity bespeaks a lofty advocacy, one which indicates sanctity."¹² A similar argument about the French tradition is made by Brigitte Cazelles, who

sees narratives about transvestite saints as part of a more generalized, more aggressive, circumscription of femininity in hagiography.¹³ The engagement with questions of gender in the thirteenth-century vernacular works recounting the lives of transvestite saints is, in my view, more complex and less essentialist than these readings suggest. For example, as I shall argue here, what occurs in the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine is less a repression or circumscription of the saint's femininity than her refusal to perform femininity in socially prescribed ways. Within this setting, cross-dressing is one among other ways of highlighting the untranslatability of the saint's gender in this work.

To summarize the story briefly, Euphrosine is born in Egypt to noble parents. When she reaches maturity, her mother dies and all the young men of Alexandria seek her hand, leading her father, Paphnutius, to promise his daughter to the only son of a rich and powerful count. Though the young man is eager for his wedding day to arrive, Euphrosine considers marriage incompatible with her devotion to God and instead decides to become a Benedictine nun. With the help of one of Abbot Theodosius's monks, she undergoes a ceremony in which she takes the veil and changes her name to "Esmerade" (meaning "Emerald"), a name we are informed is used by both men and women.¹⁴ Fearing discovery, Esmerade resolves to enter a male monastery rather than a nunnery.¹⁵ She therefore dresses as a

knight and is admitted to a Benedictine monastery, but the novice's first appearance in church stirs the desires of the younger monks to such a degree that the abbot insists Esmerade occupy a separate cell. Meanwhile, Paphnutius has been looking for his missing daughter and goes to Abbot Theodosius, who sends him to brother Esmerade for comfort and advice.

Paphnutius and Esmerade thus enter into a spiritual relationship lasting thirty years, after which time Esmerade is weakened by privations to the point of death. Shortly before she dies, Euphrosine tells the inconsolable Paphnutius that she is in fact his lost daughter and gives him instructions as to how she is to be buried. Having carried these instructions out after her death, Paphnutius then joins the order to which she belonged and moves into her cell, where he spends the rest of his life.

As this summary implies, Euphrosine consciously rejects the conjugal role that society - most especially her father - expects her to perform. Her cross-dressing is consequently part of a broader refusal to "translate" gender in socially intelligible ways, a refusal that conforms to and makes manifest the saint's spiritual calling. To frame this in the terms I have been borrowing from Butler, the question "what does gender want of me?" in Euphrosine's case involves negotiating the demands of family and society, but is ultimately subordinate to the question "what does God want of

me?" The poem's exploration of the tension between these questions results in an inner wrestling on Euphrosine's part that bears comparison with that of romance heroines like Silence. Euphrosine's monologues also participate in a more general tendency in twelfth- and thirteenth-century French hagiography to dramatize the saint's emotions, a tendency that builds upon the extension of dramatic dialogue already seen in the Latin tradition.¹⁶ As in Silence's dialogues with Nature and Nurture (analysed later in this article), Euphrosine's thinking is juxtaposed with advice given to her by authority figures, most notably Abbot Theodosius and Saint Sophia. Yet, while the upshot of this is the saint's resolution to dress as a man, the motivations for her cross-dressing are predictably rather different from those highlighted in the romance. Whereas Silence chooses to preserve the gender identification imposed by her father and does so in order to maintain her hold on the family's inheritance, Euphrosine decides to reject her inheritance and the gender roles to which it is attached, disobeying her father into the bargain. Following her betrothal, in a monologue that elaborates on the Latin source for the French text, Euphrosine repeatedly emphasizes that, although she recognizes the legitimacy of marriage in God's eyes, virginity is far superior to wifedom and requires her to abandon family and inheritance as well as the prospect of continuing the family line (Euphrosine vv. 177-200). While Silence is faced with a choice between identifying as either

male or female, Euphrosine instead opposes wifehood and virginity which, though both legitimate options, are mutually incompatible in her eyes.¹⁷

Gender and Genre Trouble in the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine

However, it is not just women's roles in family structures that Euphrosine casts aside: she also discards identities with more literary associations. If this is already true to some extent of her rejection of marriage - insofar as the desires of her suitor are described as an explicitly sexualized form of romantic love associated with status and chivalric attainment - this is also the case for Euphrosine's brief incarnation as a knight. Following advice from Abbot Theodosius and with the aid of a monk from his monastery, Euphrosine takes the veil, but, fearing discovery if she enters a nunnery, decides to go to a male monastery instead. In a passage that again considerably expands upon the Latin source for this text,¹⁸ Euphrosine then dresses as a knight in order to conceal her female appearance:

Gette dras de nonain et prent chevalerie.

Or oiés damosele painturee et forbie.

Osteit at la nonain la bele Eüfrosine:

Chemise de cansil vestit por l'astamine;

En liu de la cucule le peliçon d'ermine;

Por le froc un mantel de purpre utremarine;
Por le voilh une coiffe a ovre alixandrine;
L'amite a or batue a color saphirine;
Chaces d'un pale vert at chacié la mescine.
O taz dras vuet aler a la cort la regine.
Nel faisoit por orguel, mais por bele doctrine.
Miez en est al mostier, a la gent poverine. (Euphrosine
vv. 492-503)

[[Euphrosine] casts off her nun's clothing and adopts the appearance of a knight. Now listen to how the young woman paints and polishes herself! The beautiful Euphrosine takes off the nun's habit. She clothes herself in a chemise made of linen instead of the one of wool; in place of the cowl¹⁹ [she puts on] the robe furred with ermine; instead of the habit a mantel of ultramarine purple; instead of the veil a cap of Alexandrine embroidery, the sapphire-colored hood decorated with beaten gold. The maiden slipped on pale green stockings. You could go to the queen's court in such clothing! She did not do this through pride, but on the basis of good instruction. She is better off in the monastery, with the poor folk.]

In a way that mirrors the contrastive techniques used to dramatic effect elsewhere in this work, the poet here

emphasizes the distinction between the opulent clothing Euphrosine puts on as a knight and her clothing as a nun, a distinction that also extends to the richness of her disguise and the poverty of the monastery to which she is heading. The poet nonetheless appears to be a little nervous about the implications of such a juxtaposition. This nervousness manifests itself in the comments about Euphrosine's motivations (not "orguel" but "bele doctrine," vv. 502-3), which might equally be read as an admission of the guilty pleasure one might take in reading - or in writing - this passage. The poet's description merges a lavish attention to sumptuous fabrics and adornments with an ambiguously eroticized description of a beautiful young woman stripping off her nun's clothing and slipping into a spectacular set of men's clothes. Euphrosine's chivalric garb is a narrative expedient, but its rich description raises the question of why, if one is about to join an order that prides itself on its poverty, one would dress up as if going to the royal court (and, furthermore, why this writer feels the need to describe the saint's disguise at such length). As Jane Burns's work on clothing in medieval literature has shown, gender in medieval courtly narratives is often configured and reconfigured by clothing, material extravagance often being associated with amorous characters.²⁰ This is one possible frame of reference here, though the form of the hagiographic poem (alexandrine laisses) and the poet's description of the work in the opening

lines as a "chancon" [song] (Euphrosine vv. 1 and 11) might equally associate this section of the text with the sartorial descriptions of warriors in the chansons de geste. This passage therefore associates the luxuries Euphrosine is giving up with the pleasures of description seen in other genres of vernacular literature, providing an opportunity for readers both to indulge and to censure forms of human desire already rejected by the saint. In evoking fetishizations of masculine dress in other types of literature in French (which, as Burns points out, may themselves be ambiguously gendered), this passage also perhaps foreshadows the way in which, once Euphrosine has entered the monastery, she becomes the object of another form of sexually ambiguous and potentially sinful desire on the part of the younger monks that focuses on her person instead of her clothes.

Three of the four manuscripts transmitting the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine contain illuminations.²¹ Although the composition of the images of the saint differs in each case, all of these miniatures focus to some degree on her enclosure and depict Euphrosine/Esmerade in monastic attire. In Arsenal 5204 (fig. 1), the haloed saint stands before the monastery dressed in a brown monk's habit, her hair covered by a veil and her eyes raised heavenward (Arsenal 5204 fol. 87v). In Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 9229-30 (fig. 2), the illumination divides into two panels: on the left, Abbot

Theodosius engages in discussion with three other monks of various ages; on the right, the body of the deceased saint, eyes closed and head covered, lies before the abbot and two of his monks, who marvel at the truth they have uncovered (Bib. Roy. 9229-30 fol. 61v). The primary contrast in these two images is that between the saint's femininity and her monastic disguise: though both of the illuminations reference the saint's female sex in some way (for instance, depicting her with longer hair and a covered head, rather than a tonsure), neither of them directly represents her chivalric disguise. An interesting alternative depiction of the saint is found in the version of the Vie held at The Hague, in a Parisian manuscript commissioned by King Charles IV of France in 1327 (The Hague, KB 71 A 24 fol. 61v; fig. 3). Whereas the images in other manuscripts depict the saint after her admission to the monastery, this illumination focuses on the shift between Euphrosine's identity in the world and her monastic identity, possibly conflating her nun's and monk's outfits in the garment being placed over her head. Although Euphrosine/Esmerade's chivalric costume is still absent from this illumination, the fascination with the saint as she changes outfits is referenced visually. The beardless figure just behind the monk who clothes the saint might anticipate what follows from her admission to the monastery, both prefiguring the desire to which the saint is subject in the cloister and offering a glimpse of what she herself will look

like when dressed in a monk's habit and secluded in a private cell.²² Thus, while this miniature bypasses Euphrosine/Esmerade's disguise as a chevalier to focus on the transition between feminine and masculine, secular and religious identities, it arguably highlights the questions of desire raised by the French text in a more apparent way than the other two illuminations.

I have suggested that in the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine the saint navigates between literary and non-literary constructions of gender in her pursuit of a virginal life based on the abandonment of what those constructions entail. The evocation of other discourses of gender is, on one level, a way of forcing readers to see past the appearances Euphrosine discards by emphasizing the fact that her identity is not commensurate with her feminine or masculine clothes and, on another level, a way of highlighting the forms of desire with which those appearances are associated, desires which are similarly rejected by the saint in favor of her devotion to God. As I have suggested, these moments also provide opportunities for the expression as well as for the censoring of these desires among members of the poem's audience, a phenomenon that is considerably more developed in the French text than it is in the Latin.

Once Euphrosine has withdrawn herself from human society and been recognized a saint, the question arises as to how one

is to view the saint's gender. The end of the text as it appears in the Oxford manuscript provides a partial response to this question by reactivating various discourses of gender in the context of the poet's own veneration of the saint and his translation of the Latin Vita into French:²³

Eüfrosine dame, Deu espose et amie,
Ne te nom ne ta geste ne conisoie mie.
En un livre d'armare vi escrete ta vie.
Simplement astoit dite d'el ancienne clergie.
Ore cant je l'ou liute, reçui t'avouerie;
Por t'amor ai ta vie en romans recoilhie,
Non por li amender par maior cortesie,
Mais par ce ke je vulh qu'ele plus soit oïe.
S'atres t'aimet o moi, je n'en ai nule envie.
Tot le siecle en voroie avoir a compaignie. (Euphrosine
vv. 1260-69)

[Euphrosine, lady, God's spouse and friend/beloved
[amie], I knew nothing of your name or your
exploits/lineage [geste]; I saw your life written in a
book from a library. It was simply expressed and came of
ancient learning. Then, having read it, I received your
protection. For love of you I recollected your life in
the romance language, not in order to correct it through
a more courtly style, but because I wanted the story to

be more widely heard. If another loves you as well as me,
I would not be jealous of him. I would like the whole
world to join me.]

This epilogue both combines and reframes the different discourses mobilized earlier in the poem. The poet uses a courtly mode of address to "lady" Euphrosine and professes his love for her in a way that may recall her fiancé's expressions of devotion; the roles of wife and lover that Euphrosine has refused in a human setting are similarly evoked in her description as God's spouse and "amie." There is an allusion to epic poetry in the description of Euphrosine's "geste," which draws attention to the poetic form being used, while also perhaps referencing Euphrosine's brief incarnation as a knight, and, more generally, her exploits as part of a divine rather than an earthly lineage.²⁴ Finally, the potentially sinful desire narrowly averted in the monastery is replaced in this epilogue with a form of worship that legitimates communal desire for the saint, while distinguishing it from more exclusive forms of heterosexual and courtly love. The poet thus evokes the identities Euphrosine has refused or discarded in her lifetime, even as he offers a reminder of some of the generic associations of those identities with courtly and epic literature. What is presented here is a form of gender trouble that works in the negative, that evokes and superimposes

different discourses of gender in order to re-emphasize Euphrosine's withdrawal from them. The identity of the saint is presented at the end of the text as an untranslatable: something that refuses translation in human terms but is constantly in the process of being translated in its untranslatability through human categories.

Translating Gender in Le Roman de Silence

In the Roman de Silence by Heldris de Cornouailles, the protagonist's cross-dressing is a symptom of the problems experienced by noble families following an alteration to the rules governing inheritance in the English kingdom. Following a dispute that results in the death of two of his knights, King Ebain decrees that women should no longer be allowed to inherit. Silence's parents, Cador and Eufemie, therefore decide to raise their only female child as a boy. Discussing the baby's name with his wife, Cador proposes they call her "Scilense" (Silence v. 2067), suggesting this name can take a Latinate, masculine form as long as the child is male, while offering opportunities for later modification:

Il iert només Scilenscius;
Et s'il avient par aventure
Al descovrir de sa nature
Nos muerons cest -us en -a,

S'avra a non Scilencia.

Se nos li tolons dont cest -us

Nos li donrons natural us,

Car cis -us est contre nature,

Mais l'altres seroit par nature. (Silence vv. 2074-82)

[He will be named "Silentius." And if by some chance his/her true nature is discovered, we shall change this "-us" to "-a," and s/he will be called "Silentia." If we take this "-us" away from him/her we'll be restoring natural usage to him/her, for this "-us" goes against nature.]

The question of what is in keeping with or contrary to nature raised in the decision over Silence's name informs much of the rest of the romance. Later on, the counter-natural implications of Cador and Eufemie's decision are not lost on the adolescent Silence. On reaching the age of twelve, the youth is harangued by the allegorical figures of Nature and Nurture, but is eventually persuaded by Reason to maintain the masculine identity "he" was assigned at birth.²⁵ Silence then has a number of adventures, running away to become a minstrel, joining Ebain's court on his return, resisting the advances of the lustful queen Eufeme, and performing the seemingly impossible task of capturing Merlin in the forest, thereby fulfilling Merlin's prediction that he would only be taken by

a woman's trick. Merlin subsequently reveals to the court Silence's secret, along with queen Eufeme's duplicity, leading Ebain to restore women's inheritance rights, sentence his wife to death, and marry the newly feminized Silence.

The Roman de Silence explores the interaction between the translation of gender on a subjective level and the discursive construction of gender in linguistic, cultural, and literary contexts in a way that is even more pronounced than that observed in the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine. A romance relatively well known to scholars working on Old French literature, Silence has often been read as a text concerned with language or poetics as well as with gender identification. Critics frequently note that Silence's name is itself a paradox in that it marks a suppression of language - a silence - that reflects the secrecy surrounding the character's identity.²⁶ The passage quoted above, where Cador decides on a name for his newborn child, illustrates the often complex and playful exploration of the relationship between gender and language in the romance more broadly. "Us," a masculine ending drawn from Latin, in Old French also means "usage" or "custom", meaning that the last part of the quotation hesitates between different readings ("if we take this '-us'/usage away from him/her we'll be restoring natural '-us'/usage to him/her, for this '-us/usage is contrary to nature"). As Michèle Perret indicates, the Latin feminine ending "-a" also has the same

form as the third person singular of the verb "avoir" [to have/to possess] in Old French, creating an intriguing symmetry between the masculine and feminine endings of the baby's name and Nurture (or custom) and Nature (the feminine identity the child possesses at birth).²⁷ The scribe who copied the text in the only surviving manuscript in Nottingham (Nottingham WLC/LM/6) preserves the ambiguity of the masculine ending by leaving it unmarked: the "us" is not explicitly designated as an ending, whereas the "a", preceded by a dash, is marked as a suffix in a way that seems intended to avoid confusion with the other meanings of that letter in French (WLC/LM/6, fol. 198v).²⁸

Another significant feature of this passage is the fact that the only gendered subject pronoun in these lines is the first "he" [il]; other pronouns and possessives ("sa" and "li") could be either masculine or feminine. This hesitation over gender assignment does not translate easily into English, but illustrates how the gender of the subject does not always have to be expressed in Old French, a linguistic feature that the romance plays upon more generally. Indeed, the Picard dialect in which this romance is written is especially well adapted to cultivating such ambiguities: Picard does not distinguish the masculine and feminine direct object pronouns which in other dialects (as in modern French) would be "le" and "la", instead using "le" for both genders.²⁹

Despite the initial decision to give a name with a masculine ending to the baby, gender ambiguity is similarly preserved in the naming practices operative in the text itself. Although "Scilenscius" is the child's baptismal name, the romance usually refers to this character using the more neutral French name "Silence" originally proposed by Cador. The Latinate forms "Scilentius" and "Scilentia" appear comparatively rarely: "Scilentius" crops up again when Silence is considering the relationship between his masculine name and his gender, and both masculine and feminine forms are mentioned again in the conclusion to the romance, when Silence is re-feminized (Silence vv. 2527-46 and 6666-68). "Silence" - as a French name that lacks Latin gender - is consequently an essential part of this character's ambiguous gender expression in the manuscript. If the written form of the French name may sometimes be gendered through the Old French flexional system, this is not systematic and would make little difference to how the name sounded when pronounced aloud.

For the purposes of the argument I am making here, the interest of Silence's name lies in its connection to translation, a feature of this text's treatment of language and identity that has not usually been at the forefront of scholarly discussions of this aspect of the romance. While bearing in mind the text's linguistic playfulness, seeing this episode in terms of both linguistic and non-linguistic forms

of translation offers additional perspectives on questions of gender which complicate even further the relationship between language and sexual difference. The alternative forms of Silence's name echo the double names of transvestite saints such as Eugenia/Eugenius and Marina/Marinus; however, unlike those saints, Silence's name does not have an original, feminine form that is subsequently masculinized.³⁰ Instead, the baby is given a neutral, French name that acquires gendered suffixes through linguistic transposition.³¹ What Cadot suggests is that naming will identify his child through a form of translation that crosses the permeable borders between languages as well as genders. If the suffix "-us" masculinizes Silence through its addition to the Latin root of her name, this is also the case for what is presented as the more "natural," feminine equivalent, "Scilentia." This means that, if Silence's gender may be signified in more or less distorting ways through these different versions of her name, it is also something that does not belong to the French form of that name: her gender emerges through translation rather than being a property of the French name "Silence."³² Gender thus appears to be an effect of translation on several, related levels: it is assigned through the child's translation into language; it is the product of a further translation from French into Latin; and it is potentially subject to further linguistic transpositions depending on whether the child's gender identification changes in future.

The use of linguistic forms of translation as a way of thinking about gender assignment is thus quite explicit in the Roman de Silence; this association is also developed later in the text in a way that activates the more subjective forms of translation that Butler describes. Cador and Eufemie's decision to raise their child as a boy places Silence in an impossible situation, the implications of which are explored at some length when the child reaches maturity at the age of twelve. When his "son" realizes he is a girl [qu'il entent bien qu'il est mescine] (Silence v. 2440), Cador explains how the concealment of Silence's female sex is intended to guarantee the child's right to inherit and consequently serves both of their interests, a message tacitly reinforced by Silence's mother, as well as by the seneschal and the nurse involved in Silence's upbringing (Silence vv. 2463-2466). Seemingly persuaded by these arguments, Silence throws himself into masculine pursuits and soon outstrips his peers, a success which nonetheless awakens a niggling doubt in his mind about the propriety of this state of affairs. Following a lengthy debate in which the personifications of Nature and Nurture lock horns over the youth, the question of whether Silence should remain a boy is eventually settled by the appearance of Reason, whereupon Silence acknowledges that he ultimately has a better deal as a man:

"Voire," fait il, "a la male eure

Irai desos, quant sui deseure.
Deseure sui, s'irai desos?
Or sui jo moult vallans et pros.
Nel sui, par foi, ains sui honis
Quant as femes voel estre onis.
Gel pensai por moi aäsier.
Trop dure boche ai por baisier,
Et trop rois bras por acoler.
On me poroit tost afoier
Al giu c'on fait desos gordine,
Car vallés sui et nient mescine.
Ne voel perdre ma grant honor,
Ne la voel cangier a menor.
Ne voel mon pere desmentir,
Ainz me doinst Dex la mort sentir." (Silence vv. 2639-
54)

["Truly," he said, "it would be too bad to stoop so low when I'm on top. Given I'm on top, why would I stoop so low? At the moment, I'm valorous and strong, but I wouldn't be any more; rather, by my faith, I'd be shamed if I tried to be like the women. I thought this to make things easier for myself, but I have a mouth too hard for kisses and arms too rough for embraces. I could easily be made to look a fool in any game played under the covers, for I'm a young man, not a girl. I don't want to lose my

dignity/property [honor] and exchange it for something less. I don't want to expose my father as a liar. I'd rather God struck me down dead!"]

The assignment of Silence's gender thus operates through translation in a way that both resonates with and complicates the questions Butler formulates. What gender "wants" of Silence is presented in terms of a set of competing demands articulated by the child's parents and carers and, more forcefully, by Nature, Nurture, and Reason. The twelve-year-old Silence's response to this situation translates these demands into a lived reality he feels to be authentic, repeating the arguments made by Cador (who stresses inheritance - or "onor" - in his conversation with Silence) and Nurture (who stresses what Silence would lose alongside his "onor"). Silence's version of these arguments plays on the double meaning of "honor" in Old French, which could mean "honor/dignity" or "fief/feudal property"; Silence's claim that "Ne voel perdre ma grant honor,/Ne la voel cangier a menor" [I don't want to lose my dignity/property and exchange it for something less] fuses the superior social standing he enjoys as a young man with the inheritance he stands to gain if he remains in that position. What is represented here bears comparison with Butler's description of the subject's efforts to translate demands that are at once external to the self and integral to self narrative. Silence's speech both "translates"

what others demand of him and frames a response to those competing demands in a way that associates them with a subjective reality that reformulates them, expressing them through a recontextualization of the language used by other characters.

Translating Genre in the Roman de Silence: Hagiographic

Intertext

"What does gender want of me?" is not just a question posed by Silence in the context of social and familial expectations; as is the case for Euphrosine, this question is also explicitly conditioned by textual conventions. Indeed, the Roman de Silence explores the relationship between gender trouble and generic convention even more explicitly than does the hagiographic text. Others have discussed the way this romance rewrites other French texts;³³ some scholars have even identified elements of the romance that also feature in hagiography.³⁴ However, these studies of hagiographic intertexts do not usually consider what the purpose of such connections might be beyond drawing material from elsewhere. In this final section, I therefore explore what it might mean to read the depiction of gender in this romance through the lens of hagiographic literature, as well as in terms of Butler's notion of translation.

Heldris's presentation of the section of the text following the introductory romance about Silence's parents sets the tone for the playfulness with generic conventions that characterizes later episodes. This introductory passage - which reads as a kind of second prologue to the romance - claims that Heldris will retell in the romance language a story originally written in Latin (Silence vv. 1657-62). However, rather than insisting that he has added nothing to his source (which would be the more conventional follow-up), Heldris instead claims that he has improved his story by mixing a few lies in with the truth. He nonetheless emphasizes the care he's taken not to add anything that would detract from the work's veracity, because, as he puts it, he is obliged not to silence/suppress the truth [la verté ne doitaisir] (Silence v. 1669). Though the conventions being undercut here are not exclusive to hagiography, this framing of Silence's life story as a work that is at once based on Latinante authority and subversive of that authority's linguistic and literary expression might be seen as an ironic response to the way French religious texts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries distinguished their edifying, truthful narratives from the fictions pedalled by popular romance. In fact, the depiction of Heldris in the work's opening image may itself participate in this ironic comment, showing him before a lectern in a pose that recalls portraits of the Evangelists (WLC/LM/6 fol. 188r; fig. 4).³⁵ Moreover, what follows this mock

prologue is precisely the kind of narrative from which hagiographic authors appear to want to distance themselves, as Heldris proceeds to take a recognisable hagiographic model and give it an entertaining twist. The subsequent description of Silence's conception and birth appears to rewrite the conventional depiction of the saint's early life, as Cador prays to God that the baby be healthy and well-formed before promptly turning to questions of inheritance and his proposal to conceal the child's female sex (Silence vv. 1670-1763).

As the passages of the romance examined earlier suggest, the different forms of Silence's name and her identity crisis at the age of twelve also present certain similarities with hagiographic literature. Like some transvestite saints, Silence acts in conformity with paternal wishes and her cross-dressing is a direct result of fidelity to her father's demands. In this she resembles saints like Marina, whose life was translated into French and circulated in various forms in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³⁶ However, unlike cross-dressed female saints, Silence's refusal of gender norms does not result in a definitive rejection of those norms and the social system with which they are identified. Her father Cador makes two conflicting demands: that his daughter guarantee the continuation of the family line through inheritance, and that Silence act as a boy in order to be able to do this. Silence is therefore caught in a double bind: as a boy, he can

inherit, but can't reproduce while, as a girl, she can reproduce but can't inherit.

There have been some excellent studies of the way this romance may be a reflection of contemporary anxieties about property and inheritance rights on both sides of the Channel;³⁷ disinheritance is also briefly mentioned in the story of Grisandole upon which the Roman de Silence draws for its conclusion. However, we might also see a response to hagiographic models in the preoccupation with inheritance and its association with female cross-dressing in this text. Medieval audiences familiar with saints' lives would doubtless have picked up on the irony of a heroine whose masculine disguise confirms her adherence to property and inheritance rather than her rejection of them, as would be the case for her cross-dressed hagiographic counterparts. Silence's chastity, which is both a necessary condition of maintaining her secret and the result of what she presents as her unsuitability for "games played under the covers," might similarly be viewed in this light (Silence vv. 2648-50).

This perspective is evoked in a passage where Silence (at this point attending the English royal court) is propositioned by the libidinous Queen Eufeme:

"Dame," fait il, "por Deu, ostés!

Jo vos requier por Deu merci.

Se jo ma loialté perc chi

Donques sui jo enfin honis
Et as pïors del mont onis.
Meffait nen a el mont gregnor
Car jo sui hom vostre segnor,
Et ses parens ne sai con priés,
Ki me feroit jamais confiés?"
"Confés! Por Deu, et c'or me dites?
Serés vos monies, u hermites?
Mandés le conte vostre pere
Et la contesse vostre mere
Que vos hermites devenrés
Et que religiön tenrés!
En vos avra moult bon abé!"
"Roïne, or m'avés vus jabé."
"Non ai, se vos estes estables,
Mais jovenes sains est viés diäbles.
Lassciés, bons hom, tolt cho ester.
Ichi fait mellor arester
Q'en bos por son cors afoier." (Silence vv. 3800-3821)

["Lady," he said, "for the love of God, leave off! For God's sake, I'm begging your mercy! If I commit an act of disloyalty here, I will be so dishonored by it as to be counted among the worst men in the world. Indeed, there is no greater crime in the world, for I am your lord's vassal, and his kinsman (to

who knows what degree of proximity). Who could ever forgive me?" "Forgive you? My God, what is this you're telling me now? Are you going to be a monk or a hermit? Go and tell your father the count and your mother the countess that you're going to become a hermit and take up the religious life! You'd make a great abbot!" "My queen, now you're making fun of me." "No I'm not, if you're reliable/if you stay put [se vos estes estables].³⁸ Don't you know a saintly youth makes for an old devil? Forget all that, my good man! It's much better to stay in here than to punish your body in some forest!"]

On one level, this episode clearly draws upon the widely used Potiphar's wife motif, where a woman of high social standing tries to seduce a young man and accuses him of rape when he rejects her. Yet this passage also operates on a much more complex intergeneric level. Although Silence's rebuttal deploys a language of feudal obligation, Eufeme's teasing of him - which cleverly twists his words - suggests he is behaving like a hagiographic hero, rather than one in a courtly romance. Eufeme's claim that "a saintly youth makes for an old devil" is a quotation of conventional wisdom which also sometimes appears in French saints' lives, where it is usually aimed (ironically) at the young saint.³⁹ Assuming the person she is addressing is in fact a man, Eufeme's words might also conjure up legendary hermits such as Jehan Paulus

or Jehan Bouche d'Or, whose exile from civilization was connected to the expiation of real or imagined sexual misdemeanors with the daughters of the rulers they served.⁴⁰ What Eufeme identifies as genre trouble here is, however, a symptom of Silence's gender trouble, in that Silence remains chaste not because of a higher spiritual calling but because, as the narrator implies, she lacks the physical wherewithal or the inclination to sleep with a woman, and would expose herself in more than one sense if she attempted to do so. Indeed, from the reader's perspective, the more obvious comparison would be with the lives of female saints who cross-dress to become monks or hermits, some of whom are similarly accused of sexual sins for which they are made to atone.⁴¹ However, what this comparison further underlines is the fact that Silence, though passing as a man, does not fit that generic model either insofar as his chastity is a necessary condition of his disguise, rather than the motivation for it. What the allusion to hagiographic models reveals here is a truth about Silence that both identifies him with and distinguishes him from the saint. Eufeme correctly pinpoints a lack of sexual desire but this is attributable not to a divine calling but to an earthly one, a fact which is promptly underscored as Silence thinks not of his soul but of hanging on to his inheritance (Silence v. 3874).

At the very end of the romance, once Silence's secret has been revealed to the court and once her name and body have been given newly feminine forms, the epilogue falls back on misogynist stereotypes. Addressing the women in the audience, Heldris ends with a didactic flourish, claiming that good women should be praised more than bad ones because women have less cause to be good than bad, as it goes against their nature (Silence vv. 6688-91). Silence is thus praised as an unnatural example of "good" womanhood, while the "bad" woman Eufeme is implicitly held up as an illustration of how women naturally behave if left to their own devices.⁴²

This epilogue exposes the untranslatability of gender in a different way from the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine, by further troubling the already deeply confused question of what constitutes female nature. Though much is made of Silence's exposure as a woman, her femininity is not so much revealed as reconstructed (it takes Nature no less than three days to restore Silence's female body). What is more, the careful description of Silence's return to femininity is promptly undercut by Heldris's presentation of her as a woman whose virtue resides in her rejection of female nature rather than her incarnation of it. Our final glimpse of Silence places her between categories once again, not this time between male and female (though these are certainly still implicit) but between different configurations of "good" and "bad," "unnatural" and

"natural" forms of womanhood. The restoration of Silence's femininity thus re-poses the still unsettled question of what gender "wants" while presenting this in the context of conflicting and constantly shifting definitions of female "nature." Once again, gender is presented as a problem of translation, this time not just for Silence herself, but also for the women in the audience whom Helderis invites to work against their natural inclinations, an unnatural disciplining of female nature which he hopes will silence the criticism of his romance that he seems to anticipate. The epilogue consequently places the women of the audience in a similar position to Silence as a young adult trying to formulate a response to the demands made by parents, Nature, and Nurture. Rather than providing an answer to the question of what gender "wants," the conclusion to the romance underscores the necessity of having to translate that question, as well as the impossibility of knowing the terms on which one does so.

Conclusion: What does Genre Want?

In both the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine and the Roman de Silence, then, female cross-dressing is part of a much broader exploration of questions of identity that presents gender as an untranslatable constantly in the process of being translated, not only by characters themselves but also by narrators, readers, and listeners. In each of these texts,

this untranslatability manifests itself in different ways and is used to different effect. In the saint's life, the refusal of human gender roles underlines Euphrosine's withdrawal from the world and dedication to God, inviting the text's readers or listeners to view the saint in her untranslatability. In the Roman de Silence, this question is complicated by the fact that, despite some similarities with cross-dressed saints, Silence does not withdraw herself from the world and its demands. This romance instead represents the untranslatability of gender in a human context that Heldris's epilogue extends to the female audience of the work.

In both of these texts the issue of how to translate what gender "wants" is figured in terms of competing demands. This question is not only articulated in terms of parental expectations, social convention, and notions of what constitutes "natural" behavior, but is also framed by reference to narrative conventions which configure gender in distinctive ways. Gender trouble thus shades into moments of genre trouble, as these works evoke, manipulate, and contest discourses of gender associated with other types of text (courtly and epic literature in the saint's life; hagiography in Silence).

Paying greater attention to the translation and untranslatability of gender in hagiographic and romance narratives offers an alternative to the view that depictions

of female cross-dressing involve the suppression of a feminine identity or, conversely, a form of gender hybridity, as has sometimes been claimed.⁴³ Though they work within cultural discourses that may presume a binary gender model, the way these texts draw on such discourses demonstrates the heterogeneity – and in some cases the mutual incompatibility – of contemporary medieval configurations of gender. Viewing gender as embedded within a set of translation problems that are, in turn, the product of competing conventions and expectations points toward a conception of gender as something to be formulated or reformulated, while never quite being fully translatable.

Such an approach also provides ways of thinking further about the function of intertextual dialogue in medieval texts, especially as this concerns the intersections between hagiographic and romance literature. What I have been calling “genre trouble” is part of a sustained exploration in these works of the way gender identification operates through the translation of multiple demands: the demands of family and society as well as of languages and literary texts. Viewed in this setting, the examples discussed here from the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine and the Roman de Silence suggest that intertextual reference may be used to underline the way the gender of cross-dressed characters translates – or fails to translate – in a discursive field that incorporates while also

ranging beyond literary texts. Such references extend the intradiegetic question of what gender “wants” to readers and audiences versed in a common set of textual conventions, inviting them to consider that question in a broader literary context. The relatively circumscribed comparison of the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine and the Roman de Silence presented here suggests that the more conceptual uses of such intertextual reference as it connects with questions of ontology and sexual difference in medieval literature merits further discussion, particularly when it comes to better understanding the complex dialogue between vernacular hagiography and romance.

This article has maintained that an engagement with translation studies offers potentially productive ways of thinking gender and translation together in medieval texts. It also, I hope, offers a glimpse of what translation studies has to gain from looking to pre-modern cultures. Medieval examples offer a distinctive exploration of the philosophical questions that the discipline of translation studies has enabled, but has hitherto considered primarily in relation to the present day. Predictably perhaps, the medieval texts examined here fall short of providing an answer to the question of what gender “wants,” but they may still help us to see the historical longevity and complexity of gender’s untranslatability a little more clearly.

Figure Captions

Fig. 1. Saint Euphrosine in front of the monastery. Paris, Arsenal 5204 fol. 87v

Fig. 2. Abbot Theodosius in discussion with three other monks (left panel), and the body of the deceased Saint Euphrosine, with the abbot and two of his monks (right panel). Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 9229-30 fol. 61v

Fig. 3. Saint Euphrosine being dressed in a monastic habit. The Hague, KB 71 A 24 fol. 61v

Fig. 4. Author portrait of Heldris de Cornouailles. Nottingham, WLC/LM/6 fol. 188r

Notes

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¹ References are to La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine, ed. Raymond T. Hill, Romanic Review 10 (1919): 156-69 and 191-232 and to Heldris de Cornouailles, Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance, ed. and trans. Sarah Roche-Mahdi (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1992). References to the French texts are to these editions, which are hereafter cited as Euphrosine and Silence respectively. Further citations will be given

parenthetically in the text by verse number. Translations are my own.

² Judith Butler, "Gender and gender trouble," in Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon, ed. Barbara Cassin, translation ed. Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood, trans. Steven Rendall, Christian Hubert, Jeffrey Mehlman, Nathanael Stein, and Michael Syrotinski (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 377-79. The Dictionary is based on a work originally published in French: Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: dictionnaire des intraduisibles, ed. Barbara Cassin (Paris: Seuil/Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2004).

³ Butler, "Gender and gender trouble," 379.

⁴ On this point, see Emily Apter, Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability (London and New York: Verso, 2013), 170-171. The position Butler articulates here bears comparison with Jacques Derrida's reading of the term "Geschlecht" in Heidegger's work (a German term with meanings ranging from "sex" and "gender" to "genre," "family," "race," "lineage," and "generation"). In his essay, Derrida claims that "the thought of Geschlecht and that of translation are essentially the same." Jacques Derrida, "Geschlecht, Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference," Research in Phenomenology 13.1 (1983): 65-83 (75).

⁵ See, for example, Butler's Giving an Account of Oneself (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005) and Undoing Gender (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁶ Butler, Giving an Account of Oneself, 79.

⁷ The oldest manuscript of the Vie de Sainte Euphrosine (O) has been dated to the early thirteenth century on codicological grounds: Paul Meyer, Documents manuscrits de l'ancienne littérature de la France conservés dans les bibliothèques de la Grande Bretagne: Rapports à M. le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1871), 145-150; La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine, ed. Hill, 160; Amy V. Ogden, Hagiography, Romance and the Vie de Sainte Eufrosine, Edward C. Armstrong Monographs, 13 (Princeton: Edward C. Armstrong, 2003), 27-9. For linguistic analysis of the poem, see Gilles Roques, "Pour la localisation de la Vie de sainte Euphrosyne," Revue de Linguistique Romane 46 (1982): 29-33. Estimates regarding the date of Silence have ranged between 1225 and 1286 and a comprehensive assessment of the date of the romance that takes into account both philological and codicological information has yet to be carried out. Keith Busby placed the manuscript transmitting the poem at the end of the thirteenth century, suggesting it may have been produced for Béatrix de Gavre, on the occasion of her marriage to Guy IX de Laval in 1286. Alison Stones has proposed a re-dating of the manuscript to the first quarter of the thirteenth century on the basis of

codicological and decorative features, a thesis which contradicts not only Busby's dating of the codex, but also many conventional datings of the Roman de Silence on linguistic and stylistic grounds. Thorpe placed the romance in the second half of the thirteenth century (1250-1300); Psaki offers a similar date in her translation of the poem, though Hess cites private correspondence with the translator suggesting a revised dating to the first half of the thirteenth century, based on structural and thematic considerations. The earlier date for the manuscript proposed by Stone would suggest that the later thirteenth century date often claimed for this romance by literary historians needs reconsideration. Keith Busby, Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript, 2 vols. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), 1:415-16. Alison Stones, "Two French Manuscripts: WLC/LM/6 and WLC/LM/7," in The Wollaton Manuscripts: Texts, Owners and Readers, ed. Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell and Brewer, 2010), 41-56 (41-6). Heldris de Cornuälle, Le Roman de Silence: A Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Verse Romance by Heldris de Cornuälle, ed. Lewis Thorpe (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1972), 10 and 16-17. Heldris de Cornuälle, Le Roman de Silence, trans. Regina Psaki, Garland Library of Medieval Literature 63B (New York and London: Garland, 1991), ix; cf. Erika E. Hess,

"Inheritance Law and Gender Identity in the Roman de Silence," in Law and Sovereignty in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, ed. Robert S. Sturges, Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 28 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 217-35 (218).

⁸ According to Szkilnik, the playful quality of this depiction in the French tradition may be more characteristic of texts written before the fourteenth century. Michelle Szkilnik, "The Grammar of the Sexes in Medieval French Romance," in Gender Transgressions: Crossing the Normative Barrier in Old French Literature, ed. Karen Jane Taylor (New York: Garland, 1998), 61-88.

⁹ Simon Gaunt, Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁰ The connections between hagiography and romance have been much debated in the past forty years or so. M. Dominica Legge denied the interaction between religious and secular genres altogether, though this is not a view now widely held among scholars: "Anglo-Norman Hagiography and the Romances," Medievalia et Humanistica, ns6 (1975): 41-49. For an overview of earlier critical positions as well as an argument about the overturning of hagiographic conventions in romance, see Margaret Hurley, "Saints' Legends and Romance Again: Secularization of Structure and Motif," Genre 8.1 (1975): 60-73. An example of the kind of work on the French tradition to which I am referring may be found in Brigitte Cazelles, The

Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 33-34. Duncan Robertson sees similarities rather than differences between French hagiography and romance, though still regards this in terms of generic hybridization: The Medieval Saints' Lives: Spiritual Renewal and Old French Literature (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1995), 248-9. For sympathetic discussion of his position see Ogden, Hagiography, Romance and the Vie de Sainte Eufrosine, 6-8. Other critics have considered how the conventions of secular romance are critiqued or manipulated in vernacular hagiography. For example, Simon Gaunt, Gender and Genre, 180-233; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "The Virgin's Tale," in Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect, ed. Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London: Routledge, 1994), 165-94; and, also by Wogan-Browne, Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c.1150-1300: Virginity and its Authorizations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 91-123.

¹¹ John Anson, "The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif," Viator 5 (1974): 1-32. On the Latin and vernacular traditions, see Hotchkiss, Clothes Make the Man, 14-15.

¹² Hotchkiss, Clothes Make the Man, 13-14. Bullough also suggests that transvestite saints traditionally deny their

biological femininity: "Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages," in Handbook of Medieval Sexuality, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 223-42 (230). The analysis of the phenomenon of medieval cross-dressing in Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender similarly takes sexual difference as determinative and argues that the distinction between "female" and "feminine" only appears in the later Middle Ages as a result of Cistercian reassessment of gender attributes. Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 45-73.

¹³ Cazelles, The Lady as Saint, 62-86.

¹⁴ Iphis in the Ovide moralisé similarly has an androgynous name, though she bears this from birth (Book 9, vv. 2878-80). Ovide moralisé: Poème du commencement du quatorzième siècle. Tome III (Livres VII-IX), ed. C. de Boer et al.,

Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschapaen te Amsterdam, Afdeeling Letterkunde 30 (Amsterdam: 1931), 291.

¹⁵ Insofar as is possible, I refer to cross-dressed characters using names and pronouns that reflect usage in the Old French texts. In referring to Euphrosine in this article, I have mostly used feminine pronouns while indicating moments where she is referred to more neutrally as "Esmerade"; in referring to Silence, I generally use masculine pronouns to refer to the character when his gender performance is male and feminine

pronouns when the text and/or characters within it refer to Silence as female. Though not a convention commonly adopted by critics writing about these works, this practice is more in keeping with my argument than consistent use of names or pronouns considered to reference an underlying gendered identity. As discussed later, on pp. 00-00, such usage in Old French can be ambiguous in ways that are difficult to translate into English.

¹⁶ Evelyn Birge-Vitz, "Performing Saintly Lives and Emotions in Medieval French Narrative," in The Church and Vernacular Literature in Medieval France, ed. Dorothea Kullmann (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), 201-13.

Laurent, Plaire et édifier: Les Récits hagiographiques composés en Angleterre aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles (Paris: Champion, 1998), 309-10. In the Latin version of this text, the saint's feelings are more often articulated through dialogue, though there is some use of the monologue form: for example, "Vita Sancta Euphrosynae Virginis," Patrologia Latina, vol. 73, cols. 643b-652b (646c).

¹⁷ This may reflect a shift in the church's attitude towards the conjugal life. André Vauchez argues that, by the end of the twelfth century lay Christians were being recognized as saints, meaning that, by the thirteenth century, the monastic life was no longer a requirement for sainthood. Euphrosine appears to acknowledge this, while nonetheless claiming her

vocation is incompatible with wifehood. Vauchez, "Lay People's Sanctity in Western Europe: Evolution of a Pattern (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)," in Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 21-32.

¹⁸ The Latin simply states "Et haec dicens projecit vestem muliebrem, induitque se virilem, et sero facto exivit de domo sua, accipiens secum quingentos solidos, et abscondit se in aliquo loco per totam noctem." "Vita Sancta Euphrosynae," 646c.

¹⁹ The cuculla is a cowl worn over the ordinary tunic in choir, at chapter, and at certain other ceremonial times. "Cuculla" comes from the Greek word "koukoulion": the great habit worn after final profession of monastic vows.

²⁰ E. Jane Burns, Courtly Love Undressed: Reading Through Clothes in Medieval French Culture (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002). For discussion of how clothes may reconfigure gender, see 121-48.

²¹ The four manuscripts that transmit the Vie are Oxford, Bodleian Canonici Miscellaneus 74, fols. 87r-108v (early thirteenth century); Paris, Arsenal 5204, fols. 87v-97v (fourteenth century, possibly c. 1328); Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 9229-30, fols. 61v-70v (c. 1320-40); and The Hague, KB 71 A 24, fols. 61v-70v (c. 1327). All of these manuscripts contain illuminations, except Bodleian Canonici Misc. 74.

²² In Bibliothèque Royale 9229-30, the presence of a younger, beardless figure in the two images arguably has a different resonance. Though the first half of the image in this manuscript may represent the discussion that takes place after Euphrosine's admission to the monastery, the second half shows the saint on her deathbed, with monks of various ages in conversation over her body. The juvenile desire that threatens the saint may be alluded to here, but is framed in terms of the posthumous veneration of Euphrosine.

²³ This epilogue does not feature in all the manuscripts transmitting the Vie: it is reproduced in Hill's edition on the basis of O (Bodleian Canonici Misc. 74).

²⁴ This phrasing also echoes the earlier reference to Paphnutius's recording of Euphrosine's "geste" after her death (Euphrosine vv. 1229-32). On the association between epic and hagiographic traditions in French, see Johannes Wilhelmus Bonaventura Zaal, "A Lei francesca" (sainte Foy, v. 20): Étude sur les chansons de saints Gallo-romanes du XIe siècle (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 137-52.

²⁵ My use of pronouns to refer to cross-dressed characters follows as far as possible usage in the Old French text. See note 15.

²⁶ Critics who have discussed Silence's naming as part of a more pervasive interest in language and signification in the romance notably include Cooper, Perret, Bloch, Allen, Gaunt,

Labbie, Hess, and Terrell. Kate Mason Cooper, "Elle and L: Sexualized Textuality in the Roman de Silence," Romance Notes 25 (1985): 341-60. Michèle Perret, "Travesties et transsexuelles: Yde, Silence, Grisandole, Blanchandine," Romance Notes 25 (1985): 328-40. R. Howard Bloch, "Silence and Holes: The Roman de Silence and the Art of the Trouvère," Yale French Studies 70 (1986): 81-99. Peter L. Allen, "The Ambiguity of Silence: Gender, Writing, and Le Roman de Silence," in Sign, Sentence, Discourse: Language in Medieval Thought and Literature, ed. Julian N. Wasserman and Lois Roney (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1989), 98-112. Simon Gaunt, "The Significance of Silence," Paragraph 13 (1990): 202-16. Erin F. Labbie, "The Specular Image of the Gender-Neutral Name: Naming Silence in Le Roman de Silence," Arthuriana 7.2 (1997): 63-77. Erika E. Hess, Literary Hybrids: Cross-dressing, Shapeshifting, and Indeterminacy in Medieval and Modern French Narrative, Studies in Medieval History and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), esp. 55-8. Katherine H. Terrell, "Competing Gender Ideologies and the Limitations of Language in Le Roman de Silence," Romance Quarterly 55.1 (2008): 35-48.

²⁷Perret, "Travesties et transsexuelles," 335. See also Mason Cooper, "Elle and L," 347. Bloch indicates that Silence later suggests the "-us" is contrary to both custom and nature. Bloch, "Silence and Holes," 86.

²⁸ The reading of v. 2077 in the manuscript is consequently "nos muerons cest us en -a." A digitized copy of parts of the manuscript (including this folio) is available at <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/medievalliterarymanuscripts/wollatonlibrarycollection/wlclm6.aspx>. This marking of the feminine ending does not occur at the end of the manuscript (WLC/LM/6 fol. 223r), vv. 6666-6669, where neither "us" nor "a" is marked.

²⁹ An example of the kind of ambiguity this permits would be the announcement of Silence's marriage to the king at the end of the romance: "li rois le prist a feme puis" (v. 6677) could translate as either "the king took her to wife" or "the king took him to wife."

³⁰ Hotchkiss, who suggests that Silence is one of a number of characters who "hide their female bodies beneath male clothing and their female names behind equally superficial masculine endings," seems to overlook this point. Valerie Hotchkiss, Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 118.

³¹ Allen points to the way Latin is identified with gender in this text; he considers the tolerance for gender ambiguity in French to be one of the romance's defining ambiguities. Allen, "The Ambiguity of Silence." Campbell makes an argument about the conflation of language, gender, and sexuality based on a similar observation: Kofi Campbell, "Queer from the very

beginning: (en)gendering the vernacular in medieval France," in Comparatively Queer: Interrogating Identities Across Time and Cultures, ed. Jarrod Hayes, Margaret R. Higonnet, and William J. Spurlin (New York: Palgrave, 2010), 23-43. Hess suggests Silence's name connotes a fullness of gender, rather than its absence. Hess, Literary Hybrids, 55.

³² Allen observes that the distinction between "Silentius" and "Silentia" pertains only to Latin, whereas "romans" tolerates greater gender ambiguity. Allen, "Ambiguity of Silence," 109. See also Terrell, "Competing Gender Ideologies," 43-6, and Labbie, "The Specular Image of the Gender-Neutral Name," esp. 75. It is worth noting that the medieval Latin term for "silence" - "silentium" - is neuter, meaning that, if Silence's French name were translated into Latin, it would still not be gendered masculine or feminine. "Taciturnitas," by contrast, is feminine.

³³ On the romance's rewriting of L'Estoire de Merlin, as well as certain details from the Historia Regum Britanniae and Wace's Brut see Heldris de Cornuälle, Le Roman de Silence ed. Thorpe, 28-35. On other literary reworkings in the romance see also Lorraine Kochanske Stock, "The Importance of Being Gender 'Stable': Masculinity and Feminine Empowerment in Le Roman de Silence," Arthuriana 7.2 (1997), 7-34 and Roche-Mahdi's introduction to the edition used here: Silence, ed. and trans. Roche-Mahdi, xii-xvii.

³⁴ There is passing reference to hagiographic intertexts for the romance in Silence, ed. and trans. Roche-Mahdi, xvi.

Dahmen considers how the romance places hagiographic elements in a courtly setting: Lynne Dahmen, "Sacred Romance: Silence and the Hagiographical Tradition," Arthuriana 12.1 (2002): 113-122. See also Suzanne Kocher, "Narrative Structure of the Roman de Silence: Lessons in Interpretation," Romance Notes 42.3 (2002): 349-58. In an essay on Euphrosine, Gaunt briefly compares Silence and the saint, observing that cross-dressing raises the specter of homosexuality in each text: "Straight Minds 'Queer Wishes' in Old French Hagiography: La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine," in Premodern Sexualities, ed. Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 155-73 (166-7).

³⁵ This portrait differs from the depiction of clerical writing elsewhere in the same manuscript (e.g. on fols. 126v and 137v).

³⁶ For comparison of Marina and Euphrosine, see Emma Campbell, "Epistemology of the Cloister: Knowledge, Identity and Place in Old French Saints' Lives," Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures 36.2 (2010): 205-232.

³⁷ Craig A. Berry, "What Silence Desires: Female Inheritance and the Romance of Property," in Translating Desire in Medieval and Early Modern Literature, ed. Craig A. Berry and Heather Richardson Hayton, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and

Studies 30 (Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 217-34. Robert S. Sturges, "The Cross-dresser and the Juventus: Category Crisis in Silence," Arthuriana 12.1 (2002): 37-49. Heather Tanner, "Lords, Wives, and Vassals in Silence," Journal of Women's History 24.1 (2012): 138-59. Hess, "Inheritance Law and Gender Identity in the Roman de Silence." Kinoshita argues that the romance euphemizes the biopolitics of lineage in more general terms. Sharon Kinoshita, "Heldris de Cornuaille's Roman de Silence and the Feudal Politics of Lineage," PMLA 110 (1995): 397-409; and "Male-Order Brides: Marriage, Patriarchy, and Monarchy in the Roman de Silence," Arthuriana 12 (2002): 64-75. On the way transvestite romances trouble the dynastic principles of aristocratic society, see Peggy McCracken, "'The Boy who was a Girl': Reading Gender in the Roman de Silence," The Romanic Review 85.4 (1994): 517-36.

³⁸ "Estables" has a range of possible meanings here: it could refer to gender or sexual instability, or to more diffuse notions of (moral) constancy or firmness. On the possible resonances of this term with the romance's questioning of any stable system of gender difference see Stock, "The Importance of Being Gender 'Stable'," 8.

³⁹ The proverb is quoted in this way in Guillaume de Berneville's Vie de Saint Gilles, where the falsity of the claim is immediately pointed out. Guillaume de Berneville, La

Vie de Saint Gilles, ed. and trans. Françoise Laurent (Paris: Champion, 2003), vv. 87-95. On the broader literary context for this proverbial reference, see John Frankis, "Languages and Cultures in Contact: Vernacular Lives of St Giles and Anglo-Norman Annotations in an Anglo-Saxon Manuscript," Leeds Studies in English, ns38 (2007), 101-33 (107-11), https://ludos.leeds.ac.uk:443/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=123832&silos_library=GEN01.

⁴⁰ These legends also circulated in Picard dialect, though extant copies of them are later than the earliest suggested dating for the manuscript transmitting Silence (see note 7 above). The oldest Life of Jean Paulus is a Picard text from the mid-thirteenth century; a late-thirteenth century Life of Jean Bouche d'Or was written in Picard dialect by a poet called "Renaut." In the case of Jehan Paulus, this saint resembles the depiction of Merlin later on in Silence.

⁴¹ Saint Marina would again be an obvious parallel. Eufeme's reference to an abbot may also be reminiscent of Eugenia's legend: Eugenia became an abbot and was accused of rape by a rich lady, disrobing herself to prove the accusation false. On the association of cross-dressed characters with homosexuality in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century texts, see Perret, "Travesties et transsexuelles."

⁴² On the paradoxical qualities of this ending, see Gaunt, "The Significance of Silence" and Roberta L. Krueger, Women Readers

and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 101-27.

⁴³ Hotchkiss, Clothes Make the Man. Bullough, "Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change," 231-2. Robert L. A. Clark critiques this position in scholarship on Silence: "Queering Gender and Naturalizing Class in the Roman de Silence," Arthuriana 12.1 (2002): 50-63. The perspective I have outlined here also offers an alternative view of cross-dressed saints from that proposed by Garber, who sees these figures as focal points for other kinds of theological and cultural anxiety. Marjorie Garber, Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety (New York: Routledge, 1992), esp. 210-33.